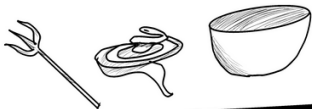


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ANNAPURNA DEVI



LORD SHIVA AND GODDESS PARVATI USED TO PLAY THE GAME OF DICE. ONCE THEY WERE PLAYING AND THE GAME BECAME VERY INTERESTING. THEY STARTED BETTING. PARVATI KEPT HER JEWELS AND SHIVA KEPT HIS TRIDENT. SHIVA LOST THE GAME AND HE LOST HIS TRIDENT. SO IN THE NEXT GAME HE BET HIS SNAKE TO GET BACK THE TRIDENT. HE LOST IN THIS GAME TOO. HE PLAYED MORE AND BET MORE AND KEPT ON LOSING. EVENTUALLY HE LOST EVERYTHING INCLUDING HIS BEGGING BOWL.

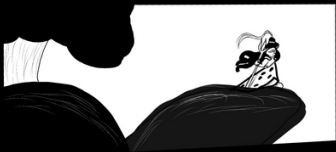


SHIVA FELT VERY HUMILIATED AND WENT TO DEODAR FOREST TO MEET LORD VISHNU. LORD VISHNU APPROACHED SHIVA WHO TOLD HIM EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED. LORD VISHNU THEN TOLD SHIVA TO PLAY THE GAME AGAIN. HE TOLD HIM THAT HE WILL WIN BACK EVERYTHING HE HAD LOST IN THE NEXT GAME. SHIVA TOOK LORD VISHNU'S ADVICE AND WENT BACK TO PLAY THE GAME AGAIN.

GODDESS PARVATI BECAME SUSPICIOUS OF SHIVA'S SUDDEN TURN OF FORTUNES THAT LED HIM TO WIN BACK EVERYTHING. SHE CALLED HIM A CHEAT. THIS LED TO AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM. FINALLY, LORD VISHNU APPEARED AS HE COULD NOT TAKE THE FIGHT ANYMORE. HE TOLD THEM THAT THE DICE IN THE GAME HAD MOVED ACCORDING TO HIS WISH AND THEY WERE ONLY UNDER AN ILLUSION THAT THEY HAD BEEN PLAYING.



TO THIS SHIVA ADDED THAT EVERYTHING MATERIALISTIC WAS JUST AN ILLUSION OR MAYA. EVERYTHING THAT WE POSSESSED WAS AN ILLUSION. EVEN THE FOOD WE ATE WAS MAYA. THIS MADE GODDESS PARVATI ANGRY. SHE DID NOT AGREE THAT FOOD WAS AN ILLUSION. SHE SAID THAT CALLING FOOD AN ILLUSION WAS EQUIVALENT TO CALLING HER AN ILLUSION. SO IN ORDER TO SHOW LORD SHIVA AND THE WORLD HER IMPORTANCE SHE DISAPPEARED SAYING THAT SHE WANTED TO SEE HOW THE WORLD WOULD SURVIVE WITHOUT FOOD.



**HER DISAPPEARANCE MEANT THAT
NATURE CAME TO A STANDSTILL.
THERE WERE NO CHANGES IN
SEASONS. EVERYTHING BECAME
BARREN. THE LANDS BECAME
INFERTILE. NOTHING GREW
ANYMORE. THIS LED TO SEVERE
DROUGHT AND A HUGE SHORTAGE
OF FOOD.**



**THE GODS, HUMANS AND DEMONS ALL
KEPT PRAYING FOR FOOD. GODDESS
PARVATI HEARD THE PRAYERS AND
SHE COULD NOT SEE HER CHILDREN
PERISHING OUT OF HUNGER. SO SHE
APPEARED IN KASHI (VARANASI) AND
STARTED DISTRIBUTING FOOD.**



SHIVA REALIZED HIS MISTAKE AND THE FACT THAT HE WAS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT SHAKTI. SO HE APPEARED BEFORE GODDESS PARVATI IN KASHI WITH A BEGGING BOWL IN HIS HANDS. HE SAID HER THAT HE HAD REALIZED HIS MISTAKE THAT FOOD COULD NOT BE DISMISSED AS AN ILLUSION AND IT WAS REQUIRED TO NOURISH THE BODY AS WELL AS THE INNER SOUL. SINCE THEN GODDESS PARVATI IS WORSHIPPED AS THE GODDESS OF FOOD – ANNAPURNA DEVI. IT IS BELIEVED THAT IF THE FOOD IS COOKED WITH A SPIRIT OF HOLINESS IT BECOMES SACRED AS ANNAPURNA BLESSES IT.



ANNAPURNA

**ANNAPURNA IS THE
GODDESS OF FOOD
AND AN AVATAR OF
PARVTHI**